Mazzini: The Influential Young Revolutionist

***Mazzini ‘s dream to unite Italy into one independent nation-state***

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Mazzini was a young revolutionist who dreamt of combining Sicily, Papal States, and “Italy” (northern part of modern day Italy) into one nation to work as one unit. He got politically arrested numerous times in Italy for being a liberal thinker. He believed that young Italians could overthrow the government in order to create a unified society. He was exiled from Italy in 1830, where he remained in France, Switzerland, and England where he sparked other “Young” movements such as “Young Switzerland” as he repeatedly was forced into exile as he continued to embrace socialist ideas. He didn’t succeed with his quest to unify Italy, but his socialist ideas influenced other revolutionists to eventually unify Italy in 1871. He is included as one of the main figures who influenced the ***Risorgimento***, or national establishment in Italy.

Mazzini’s goal was to recruit young socialists in order to first create a ***Roman Constitution***,a book of laws that would rule over dominant rulers of Italy and would set down barriers that if broken, would go against national law. He first spread his influence around Italy, where his influence on the people was so big that the Italian police gave him a choice: either to be exiled or to live on a small island off the Italian coast. He chose exile, and departed off to Marcille, France in order to maintain his vision of unifying Italy by influencing others to follow in his footsteps.

 Mazzini was an important visionary of the 19th century because of his willingness and spirit towards one goal: to unite Italy. His exiles in France and Switzerland influenced thousands of young revolutionists to embrace nationalism. “So long as you are ready to die for humanity, the life of your country is immortal.” This is a quote that Mazzini used in order to recruit “young” soldiers in order to state that the country goes before the individual, which eventually led to many revolts even like ***Young Europe***, was a movement to unite the entirety of Europe into a single nation-state. After that, he formulated ***Young Switzerland*** in which he tried to invade cities such as Savoy to where he would disguise as and mutiny the army, sabotaging military operations in order to strengthen the revolutionists by weakening the opposition. Even though these revolts failed, Mazzini’s determination was strong.

He was exiled to England in 1836 and learned a new language (English). He used coordination and strategy to formulate plans to overthrow Italian princes from their thrones. However, he needed support for these movements. He contacted the pope, who lifted his exile from Italy and allowed him to be part of an assembly that would decide on a constitution. He also became part of the ***apostolate***, a ministry devoted to the Catholic Church. He decided to be part of this organization because religion had a major effect on the people of Italy during the mid-19th century. He used this influence to combine the power of God and the pride of nationalism in a way to “guilt” people into not being selfish and to think of the greater good of a nation-state. When he joined the apostolate, he carried out the duties of the group he joined before he was exiled: the ***Carbonari.***  The Carbonari were a group of revolutionary societies with a patriotic focus but lacked a political agenda. After spending about a year with the pope in 1848, he started to lead major revolts in Italy. This revolt was part of the ***First Italian War of Independence,*** which was the first attempt for revolutionists to overthrow the independent Italian princes to attempt to become a democratic society. However, Austria sided with the Italian princes to crushingly defeat the relatively smaller army of the revolutionists. The next year in 1849, Mazzini attempted again to create a Roman republic. With enough forces, intelligence, and perseverance, Mazzini marched into Rome and declared a republic for Rome. Mazzini was appointed the ruler of this new “republic”.

Mazzini spent the rest of his life avoiding the Swiss police (for they were still upset at the “Young Switzerland” movement he erupted earlier in his life) in 1850; he was one of the main supporters of the new Kingdom of Italy that was established in 1861. He later refused a seat in the ***Italian Parliament,*** which was the newly founded government; because it would involve him conduct an oath swearing allegiance to a monarchy. However, during his attempt to free Sicily to try to combine it to the existing Kingdom of Italy, he was imprisoned by the Sicily police, was freed later that year, and fled to London after being released.

In 1872, Mazzini finally met his end in Pisa. Over 100,000 people attended his funeral, as they all mourned the loss of the great nationalist thinker. Mazzini remained influential to the people even after his death.. His rise from a middle-class student to an established unique leader was a great example for other leaders to step forth. Even though most of his revolts did not lead to a victory, he paved a path for other Italian revolutionists to follow: speak to the people, and to speak for the general good of the people (utilitarianism). Overall, during Mazzini’s life in the 19th century, he was a major influence as revolts continually happen in Italy as they move closer to becoming a republic. ••